

# The generic name of the Crested Argus *Rheinardia ocellata*

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The Crested Argus *Rheinardia ocellata*, a pheasant native to South-East Asia, is listed among the species on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). For any species that is rare, endangered or threatened by trade, and thus subject to permit regulations, it is imperative that its nomenclatorial as well as population status be understood, to avoid confusion or oversight. In the authoritative literature, the generic and specific names of this pheasant are variously treated as either masculine or feminine, and the generic name is often spelled with a subterminal 't' rather than a 'd'. Several English names in addition to the one used are available (see Sibley and Monroe 1990 for examples). This note traces the history of the spellings of the generic name and attempts to stabilize it in its original form.

Elliot (1871) described a new species of pheasant, *Argus ocellatus*, based on four feathers in the Paris Museum. These feathers, later illustrated by Elliot (1872), had been mentioned in the literature previously and the specific name had been used, in the combination *Argusianus ocellatus*, based on a Verreaux manuscript, but not in such a way as to constitute a valid description (Elliot 1871, 1909).

In 1879 or 1880, a Captain Rheinard mentioned some long decorative feathers from the Tonkin region of what is now Viet Nam to A. Boucard and Anatole Maingonnat (Boucard 1892). Boucard was given the feathers and soon recognized them as being of the species that Elliot had described. Boucard urged Rheinard to obtain specimens of the bird. In early 1882, Captain Rheinard gave one specimen to Maingonnat, who exhibited it at a meeting of the Zoological Society of France and gave it the name *Argus rheinardi*. The published proceedings (Anon. 1882) of that meeting, held 13 June 1882, report Maingonnat's remarks in sufficient detail to constitute a valid description. It is clear, however, that Maingonnat intended *rheinardi* to be a substitute name for 'ocellata', which he attributed to Bonaparte (Anon. 1882: xxv).

When Boucard saw the specimen he recognized that it was not an *Argus*, and suggested that it be placed in a new genus honouring the collector. Maingonnat immediately followed this suggestion, and published the name of the new genus with the combination *Rheinardia ocellata* (Maingonnat 1882, not seen; *vide* Boucard 1892) in *La Science pour tous* for July 1882.

Oustalet (1882a, 1882b) gave expanded, detailed descriptions of the bird that Maingonnat had named, justifying the establishment of a distinct genus for it. Although he credited Maingonnat with the name, he (Oustalet 1882b) used the terms ‘*nov. gen.*’ and ‘*nov. sp.*’ Further, he changed the gender of the original *Rheinardia* to the masculine *Rheinardius* because ‘la plupart des noms de genres des Phasianidés étant masculins’ (Oustalet 1882b: 3). Later, Oustalet (1882c) said that Maingonnat’s specimen was from Buih Dinh, ‘à 100 lieus au sud de Hué’.

Sclater and Saunders (1883: 107) credited Oustalet (1882a) for the generic name *Rheinhardius* [sic]. Reichenow and Schalow (1883: 408) also noted the new genus in a compilation of recently described taxa, citing it as *Rheinardius* and attributing it to Oustalet (1882b). Oustalet (1885: 258) later said that the name of the collector of the bird Maingonnat described was ‘Rheinart, qui se termine par un t’ and changed the spelling of the generic name accordingly to *Rheinartius*.

Boucard (1892) summarized his and Maingonnat’s involvement with the discovery and naming of this pheasant and the later obtaining of additional specimens. Boucard (1892) described one of the new specimens, in the Rothschild collection, under the name ‘*Rheinardius ocellatus*, Verr *phoenix?*’ and suggested that the proper name of the species should be ‘*Rheinardius phoenix*’ because of its similarity (in his opinion, identity!) to that fabled bird as depicted in Chinese art (see Jabouille 1930). Boucard (1892) either overlooked or ignored Oustalet’s (1885) correction of the spelling of the collector’s name.

Ogilvie-Grant (1893: 366) included the genus and species in the *Catalogue of birds in the British Museum* as *Rheinardtius* [sic] *ocellatus*, with no citation for the new spelling. The generic synonymy includes three other spellings, but no citation of Maingonnat. The synonymy of the species incorrectly credits the spelling *Rheinartius* to Oustalet (1882b), and the spelling of the species name as *rheinardti* to Maingonnat in 1882.

Later, Oustalet (1898: 258) spelled the generic name *Rheinardtins* [sic], and first Elliot (1909), then Delacour and Jabouille (1925), used the ‘*dt*’ spelling without comment. Jabouille (1930: 221, 222) twice cited the collector as ‘commandant Rheinardt’ but agreed that *Rheinardia* was the correct generic name.

Delacour (1929) listed this pheasant under the name *Rheinardia ocellata*, attributing the name to Verreaux, and used the English name ‘Rheinart’s Pheasant’. In a footnote he stated that the generic name was first provided by ‘Maingounat’ in ‘*Science pour tous*’ published on 8 July 1882. He noted the change of the name to the masculine ending and then to the spelling with a ‘*t*’ rather than ‘*d*’ by Oustalet (without references) because the collector of the first complete example was ‘Commandant Rheinart’. Delacour (p. 203) concluded that ‘Perhaps under these circumstances it is best to retain the original spelling’.

Beebe (1922: 100) also spelled the generic name with a 'd' but used the masculine ending and repeated the name of the collector with a 't'. He also detailed the source of the type as 'about twenty kilometres west of Hue...at the foot of the Laos Mountains'. Subsequently, Beebe (1931: 166), in a long quotation from a communication from Delacour, spelled the generic name '*Rheinardtius*'.

Peters (1934) followed Delacour's conclusion, even to the misspelling of the name of the author of the genus. Chasen (1935) used *Rheinartia* and noted that '*Rheinardia* and Maingounat are misprints', repeating Delacour's statement of the name of the original collector. Delacour (1947, 1951) reversed his conclusion of 1929 and amended the generic name to *Rheinartia*.

Nine books—field guides and world lists—published in the period 1974-1990 uniformly use the feminine ending for the genus, but are split 5 to 4 in favour of 'd' over 't'.

Whether the original collector's name was Rheinard, Rheinart, or Rheinardt cannot now be determined. There is no firm basis for accepting an emendation and, as suggested by Delacour (1929) and Jabouille (1930), the original spelling of the generic name as proposed by Maingonnat (1882) must stand. Maingonnat indicated that he was naming the genus *Rheinardia* in honour of Captain Rheinard, with whom he and Boucard (1892) were personally acquainted. Even if he misspelled the Captain's name, and therefore the generic name, there is no evidence in the original publication of an inadvertent error in formation of the generic name, which is required by Article 32 (c) (ii) of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature to emend an incorrect original spelling.

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